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European Commission
Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs
Att. Mr Fokion Fotiadis
Rue de la Loi 200
B 1049 Brussels, BELGIUM

Date: 22 February 2007
Our reference: PRAC07.03/IH
Subject: Support for NPWG mackerel management plan


Dear Mr Fotiadis,

The Pelagic RAC would like to express its support for the proposal of the Northern Pelagic Working Group to ICES dated 8 February 2007 (copy attached) concerning management strategies for Northeast Atlantic Mackerel.

Industry has been considering the various approaches and one idea that has been suggested is that of a constant TAC. As you will see, the Northern Pelagic Working Group has asked ICES to evaluate the medium and long terms effects of this approach on the stock size and fishing mortality.

The Pelagic RAC supports the initiative to evaluate the different management concepts before deciding which is most appropriate and would like to ask the Commission to include this in its request to ICES.

Yours sincerely,



PELAGIC RAC

Ingvild Harkes

European Association of Fish Producers Organisations



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EAPO 07-07

Mr Gerd Hubold
General Secretary
International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES)
H.C. Andersens Boulevard 44-46
DK - 1553
Copenhagen V DENMARK

8 February 2007

Dear Mr Hubold

North East Atlantic Mackerel

The Northern Pelagic Working Group has recently been reviewing a number of the existing pelagic stock management plans, including North East Atlantic mackerel.

One of the concepts being considered by the Group for mackerel is that of devising a management plan which would include applying a constant TAC when the stock is above a reference level (Bpa?) and/or the fishing mortality is below a reference level. Such a plan would need to include how the TAC should be set in the event that the criteria applying the constant TAC are not met and also incorporate rules for year to year TAC flexibility in order to provide the catch level stability that industry seeks.

The Group understands that the European Commission has recently requested ICES for advice on harvest control rules for mackerel. In order to inform all parties, including managers and industry, of the attractions and detriments of the constant TAC approach, before forming opinions on the most appropriate management strategy for mackerel, the Group respectfully requests ICES to include this concept in its evaluations. This would mean that a variety of management strategies were being considered simultaneously.

The Group suggests that the evaluation should include analyses of the medium and long term effects on stock size and fishing mortality of a constant TAC including advice on the TAC and reference points to be used as trigger points for applying the TAC.

It should be noted that the reason why this request has come direct from the Northern Pelagic Working Group and not from the Pelagic RAC is because it was considered essential to get this request to you quickly. The matter was discussed at the Pelagic RAC Working Group I on 7 February and the Working Group recommended to the Executive Committee which meets later this month that they also write to you supporting this action. The RAC will write separately to you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Derek Duthie
Chairman, Northern Pelagic Working Group of EAPO

c.c. Ingvild Harkes, Secretariat, Pelagic RAC
Kenneth Patterson, European Commission, DG Fisheries